SULTAN
AHMAD JALAIR

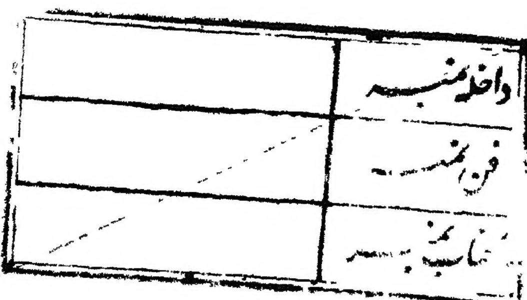
MINIATURES FROM THE PERIOD OF TIMUR

IN A MS. OF THE POEMS OF SULTAN AHMAD JALAIR



BY

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IN MEMORIAM

PREFACE

DURING the Muhammedan Exhibition at Munich in 1910 I clearly saw that the Arab, Persian and Turkish arts and crafts were so closely connected with those of the surrounding countries, that our knowledge about them could hardly be improved without studying, not only the Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Coptic arts and crafts, but also those of most other nations of Asia before and after Muhammed, and last but not least, the crafts in Europe during the Middle Age and the Renaissance. The whole atmosphere, the climate, the landscape and its vegetation, the life and manners of the peoples, their customs and costumes had also to be taken into consideration and studied.

I decided therefore to give up publishing works about Muhammedan art and devote myself for at least 15 years—15 years too little—to these studies.

It is at the request of friends in many parts of the world that I now continue those two long series which I planned over twenty years ago.

For many reasons I do it with hesitation, also because most publications of the last 12 years have contained much less new important material and solved much fewer questions than I had expected, after all the proud words I so often heard during and after that exhibition. Especially most of the very expensive books, many made "pour épater le bourgeois," have excelled in a poor and superficial text, and reproduced mostly known objects, often of very inferior quality and of doubtful interest. The climax seems now to have been reached by the new edition of the old Vienna carpet work. Superb plates of even worthless carpets and a text which hardly says anything. Although containing many mistakes, it has been proclaimed by an art-Pope "The standard work for generations." It is very doubtful if its paper will last more than one generation. I have now come to the conclusion that 40 years of assiduous study and of

diligent collecting from all parts of the world is enough to learn only something—not even much—about the Muhammedan art, especially as the Oriental sources give us so little help. Chinese art and Japanese art are easier to study, the material being enormously richer, and the great quantity of written sources being more sure, more detailed. From many long and important periods of the Muhammedan history we have hardly any works of art at all, only few fragments. Only by very short, very careful, and very fatiguing steps shall we be able to climb the hill, from which coming generations may overlook a civilisation, in its kind just as wonderful as our own.

I wish heartly to thank the heads and the workmen of all those firms in Vienna who have, in the true Viennese manner, helped me to get this first volume ready.

Settignano, September 1926.

F. R. MARTIN

I. SULTAN AHMAD JALAIR UWAYS ILKHAN OF BAGHDAD 1382—1410

THE history of Persia during the 13th—15th centuries and even later shows many analogies with that of Italy at the same period. The same wild despotism, the same cruel persons and deads paired together with the utmost refinement in arts, pleasures and luxuries of all kinds. The same eternal fights between princes and states, the same constant murders of dictators and leaders. The same, or similar, ideas and characteristics often occur in different countries in the same period. Ideas are like drops of oil, they spread in every direction, and as the earth is a ball, they spread much more quickly than if it were flat. One of these princes, I might almost call him the Sigismondo Malatesta of Persia, was Sultan Ahmad Jalair, the son of Shaik Uways of the Ilkhans of Baghdad, who came to the throne by murdering his brother Ali in 1382. Ahmad Jalair belonged to that class of persons, who have no regard for anything but their own interests. He must have possessed extraordinary courage, because he was with the Turkish Sultan Bayazid the only person who fought against Timur during his whole life, just as Charles XII of Sweden spent all his forces in fighting Peter the Great of Russia. When Timur marched on Tabriz, Sultan Ahmad was clever enough not to meet him in open battle, but retired to Nakhjuvan, where he held Timur up. Timur spent the summer at Tabriz, and this stay was disastrous to the arts and crafts of the town, as he sent all the best artists and craftsmen to Samarkand, thus encouraging the rise of his own capital at the expense of all other places where art had flourished for centuries. He achieved the thing that Napoleon wished to do 400 years later. Sultan Ahmad retired later to his capital Baghdad, and when Timur advanced on this place, Ahmad sent an ambassador, making excuses that he could not come personally to receive him. The poem, which he sent Timur to justify his not attending to him in Baghdad, was not bad, but was certainly in his position a little too haughty. Timur regretted that he himself could not answer in the same manner, but he got a secretary to compose a verse in the same style.

Timur grew angry, took Baghdad the 10 August 1393, occupied the palace and pursued Ahmad, who had fled with his court. The court, however, travelled too slowly. Timur caught it up, took some of Ahmad's

wives and his son Ala ud Dawla but the Jalair Sultan himself escaped. Amongst others the celebrated musician Khawaja had to follow those of Tabriz to Samarkand, the Paris of Asia at that time. Ahmad took refuge with Sultan Bayazid Yildirim of Turkey and tried to stir up the Emperor of Byzanz against Timur. A long correspondence exists between him and Timur concerning the surrender of Ahmad. Bayazid refused in proud words to surrender Ahmad. This correspondence might have been written during the Great War. The Egyptian Sultan invited Ahmad to Cairo and received him with peculiar honors. In reply to a threatening despatch from Timur, the Sultan used equally haughty language and contemptously compared the flowery style of the conqueror's secretary to the scraping of a bad fiddle. After Sultan Bayazid had been beaten and taken prisoner by Timur, the Egyptian Sultan changed his mind and prepared to make peace with Timur by surrendering Sultan Ahmad. The luck was with Ahmad. The news came that Timur had died on March 19, 1405.

In 1410 Sultan Ahmad was killed near Tabriz by Qara Yusuf, his pupil and fellow-exile in Egypt, with whom he had begun to quarrel. A reign of twenty-seven years and a life full of murder and attempt to murder, intrigue and fighting, but also of artistic joys, was thus brought to an end.

Sultan Ahmad Jalair read and studied Arabic and Persian and wrote poetry in both of these languages. He could write in six different styles of calligraphy, and engrave seals. He was well versed in music and composed airs, which were played by musicians still about 1550, one hundred and fifty years after his death. He could make bows and arrows, a royal occupation at that time. He was also a good painter—a perfect Renaissance prince. But he also took opium to such an extent that he sometimes had fits of madness. He treated even the most noble people with scorn and ignominy. His cruelty was insupportable to his soldiers and subjects. His emirs wrote several times to Timur to help them against their oppressor.

He was been immortalised by the greatest poet of Persia, Hafiz, whom he repeatedly strove to induce to come to his court.

"The zephyr breeze of Musalla and the stream of Ruknabad
Do not permit me to travel or wander afield" writes the poet.

Hafiz, however, composed verses in the Sultan's praise, amongst others the following:—

> "I praise God for the justice of the King
> Ahmad the son of Shaik Uways the son of Hasan Il-khani
> A Khan and the son of a Khan, a King of Kingly descent,
> Whom it were meet that I should call the Soul of the World.
>
> No rose-bud of delight bloomed for me from the earth of Fars:
> O for the Tigris of Baghdad and the spiritual wine.
> Curl your Locks in Turkish fashion, for in their fortune lie
> The Empire of Khusraw and the status of Chingis Khan."

But though Hafiz never achieved the journey to Baghdad, he seems to have often thought of it. "In Shiraz we did not find our way to our goal; Happy that day when Hafiz shall take the road to Baghdad." The court of Sultan Ahmad was as all other princes at that time large, but we hardly know anything about his court artists. He had in his service amongst others a calligrapher, scholar and wit, Mawlana Maruf, who later on went to Mirza Iskandar of Shiraz, whence Shah Rukh brought him to Herat. Al Firuzabadi, known as the author of a monumental dictionary "the Ocean," visited the court of Sultan Ahmad in 1392.

Professor Edward Browne at the University of Cambridge in his admirable work on the History of the Literature of Persia, from which most of these notes[1] about Sultan Ahmad are taken, does not seem to have seen any manuscript of the poetry of Sultan Ahmad. This manuscript therefore would seem to be only one known. Professor Browne whose too early death everybody interested in the East deeply must regret, had been kind enough to promise me some notes about it. Sir Thomas Arnold has now given me the description of the MS. printed in chapter III.

II. RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND TURKISTAN

"IT is necessary," says Professor Browne in his monumental History of Persian literature, "to remind the reader, who may be apt to think of far-reaching international relations as in a large measure a product of

modern times and an outcome of modern facilities of communication, how considerable was the intercourse in the time which we are considering between Asiatic (not merely Muslim) states far removed from one another." An Arabic traveller, Ibn al Wardi[2] in the 13th century, who wrote before the Mongol invasion, states that the Chinese were so eager to attract to their country important artists, that they tried to invite them as soon as they heard of them. This is a most important statement, and explains many a difficult point in the art of that time. If they induced Persian craftsmen to go to China, Chinese craftsmen certainly came to Persia before the Mongol invasion. He states another important fact, that the Arabs carried on a large business in porcelain with China. There are so many things in the Persian art before the 13th century pointing to Chinese origins. Probably the Chinese sold their porcelain and bought Arab enamelled glasses, of which I think more than 20 great pieces have come to Europe from China in our days. Did Chinese potters come to Persia before the Mongol invasion, to impart to the Persian potters their superior technical skill? I am convinced this was the case. I think the Raghes pottery would never have reached its perfection without Chinese models. That question I will try to solve in another work on Persian art.

The interesting extracts from that valuable, but hitherto unpublished history, the Matlau's Sa'dayn of Abdu'r-Razzaq of Samarkand, of which Quatremère[3] has printed extracts, include the accounts of two embassies from the court of Herat, the one to China, the other to India, narrated in each case by one who had accompanied the mission. The mission to China, described by Ghiyathu'd-Din Naqqash (the Painter), left Herat on December 4, 1419, reached Pekin (Khan-baligh or Cambaluc) a year and ten days later, and returned to Herat on September 2, 1422, with rich presents from the Chinese Emperor, mostly ceremonial dresses and silks, horses and arms. The description of this embassy is a most important document, especially for the ceremonies at the Chinese court. Concerning its art, with the exception of architecture, it contains less, but there are some very amusing details, amongst others the following. The Ambassador had brought with him, as the most precious gift, a horse, which Timur himself had used. The horse was very old, as Timur had been dead sixteen years, and probably it was bad tempered. The first time the Chinese Emperor rode it, his Chinese Majesty was thrown off, and the Ambassador, who was a good diplomat, escaped from being thrown into prison and probably put to death only by his clever ex-

planations. That a more precious gift could not be imagined than a horse on which the Conqueror of the world, the most powerful man of his time had once ridden and that it was almost an honour to be thrown by such a noble horse. This great Embassy was not the only one which came from and returned to China. In the accounts of the embassies, which Shah Rukh[4] sent to China and received from there, I have found details of the greatest importance. One of them from the Emperor of China to Herat came with 300 horsemen and had precious gifts for Shah Rukh, silk stuff, velvet,—I think this is one of the earliest notes about Chinese velvet,— vases of porcelain, one of the first time Chinese porcelain is named in Persian records. In 822 Shah Rukh sent some small panthers, used for hunting, to the Emperor. Such as are seen in the Benozzo Gozzoli frescoes in the Palazzo Riccardi in Florence. In 824 not less than three embassies came from China, one to Shah Rukh, another went to Shiraz and a third to Khawarzim. On their way back they passed Samarkand, where Ulugh Beg entertained them, and when they started back on their return journey to China, they were accompanied by a great number of dealers and craftsmen. What better proof can there be of a steady intercourse between Persia and China. He also received in 824 several embassies even from Tibet. A most important notice[5] is that an embassy in 821 was sent from the Amir Said Ahmad Tarkhan taking a grey horse as a present for the Emperor of China, and that he sent with the embassy a portrait of this horse executed by a painter of the country. Beside the horse were painted two palfrenies, who held the horse by the bridle. Is not that a perfect description of a Yuan picture? Was the painter a Chinaman settled in Persia? I think it very likely.

How great the intercourse was is best proved by the fact that Chinese paper money[6] circulated in Samarkand even before the time of Timur. Such a brief notice throw a new light upon the whole life in Turkistan during that period.

A mission to India, entrusted to and recorded by the above-mentioned Abdu'r-Razzaq himself, started on January 13, 1442, and landed again on Persian soil at Hurmuz in the Persian gulf on April 20, 1444.

Among many other interesting statements he tells that sailing vessels went continually from Calicut to Mekka. For the history of art there this relation contains one very important notice.

The Temple of Bilor[7] is described in the following way. "The pen and the pencil had there drawn such a great number of paintings

and figures that one could not during a month draw so many on silk or taffetas. From the bottom of the building to the top one can hardly find a hand space which is not covered with pictures in the manner of the Franks, or the people of Khatai." Both Chinese and European influence in India in the middle of the 15th century, that is 200 years earlier than we knew before.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

BY SIR THOMAS ARNOLD

THIS volume contains the collected works of the ill-fated Jalāir Sultan, in which he displays a not inconsiderable skill in the use of the verse forms commonly found in Persian poetry, e.g. the mathnawī or couplet-poem, the qaṣīdah or monorhythmic poem, the ghazal or ode, and shorter forms such as the rubā'ī or quatrain, the qiṭ'a or fragment and the mufradat or detached verses consisting of a single line.

The MS. contains 337 folios—six pages are mostly blank, probably left so for miniatures—30 × 20 cent. in size; the written surface is generally 18 × 11 cent. and is enclosed in ruled lines of gold and blue; ruled lines of gold also divide the hemistichs and the separate poems from one another; and the poet's name is also written in gold, when it occurs in the ghazals, generally in the last line, according to the common practice of Persian poets. The Sultan did not invent a pen-name for himself as was often done, but made use of his personal name—Aḥmad, occasionally Aḥmad Uways or Ibn Uways. Each page originally had a fine broad margin of 6–7 cent., divided into unequal widths by ruled lines of blue and red. But from fol. 2 to fol. 17, where the illustrations begin, the inner margin has been filled in with a copy of the works of Sa'dī,—this piece of vandalism having been perpetrated, as the copyist informs us, in the year 1052 A.H. (= 1643 A.D.). By the time he had finished his task, there were still 26 folios left, and these, with their broad, unsullied margins, for the dividing lines of blue and red were added by the copyist in the 17th century, serve to reveal the noble character of this volume in its pristine condition. It is obviously a manuscript written for the royal author himself, for (apart from other considerations) each separate poem, with the exception of the first, has written above it, in letters of gold or blue or

red, the words: "And by him too, may God Almighty make his caliphate and sultanate abide for ever,"—with an occasional variant of "caliphate" only or "sultanate and caliphate." Such a superscription could only have been written during the lifetime of this prince and the MS. must therefore have been copied before 1410, the date of the Sultan's death. This benedictory phrase is an interesting example of the practice that was becoming common in the 14th century, for any independent Muslim sovereign to assume the title of Caliph, in defiance of the orthodox doctrine which reserved this supreme title in the Muslim world to the members of the Arab tribe of the Quraysh,—and Aḥmad ibn Uways was not even an Arab but a Mongol!

The MS. has no colophon, but in an unusual place at the top of the last folio there is written in a handwriting other than that of the copyist of the manuscript:—"The book was finished by the help of God the Giver in the month of Ramaḍan in the year eight and-five hundred in the Hijrah of the Prophet (God bless him)." Such a strange date can only have been intended to mean 805 (= 1402–3 A.D.).

Towards the bottom of this page, below the last line of the text, is written, again in a different handwriting from that of the original copyist or that of the person who added the date, the words: "The hand-writing of Mīr 'Alī (mercy be upon him)." This ascription is impossible, as this celebrated calligraphist's activity belongs to the following century, for he died about the year 1558. But the fact that this MS. should have been regarded as the work of one of the most famous pen-men among the copyists of Persian MSS., is in itself testimony to the admiration with which this beautifully written MS. was regarded.

In regard to the poems themselves it is of interest to note that on one of the illustrated pages the following verse, containing a reference to Chinese portrait painting, occurs:

"Is this the moon? the sun? Oh what a cheek and shining brow!
Now God be praised a thousand times,—e'en that is not enow.
These eyes—these brows—this mole—these locks so smooth—this down so slight!
A Chinese painter might spend years in drawing such a sight."

The following examples of the love-poems of the Sultan may be given:—

"O God, where is that cypress now
 That caused my life to fade?
The robber of my heart heeds not
 The sorrow he has made.
Wisdom and love are far apart,
 As motes are from the sun.
Aḥmad would give his life, if thus
 His loved one could be won."

Again:—

"Such fairy form no mortal should assume,
 For only fairies born can look like thee.
But whoso rashly trusts thy fickle words
 Humiliation's lowest depths will see.
Whene'er the nightingale outpours his plaint,
 The rosebud tears its robe, with passion mad.
My soul is trouble-tost; my streaming eyes
 Flow faster than the Tigris at Baghdad."

Like every other pious Muslim poet, the Sultan devotes some of his verses to the praise of the Prophet, and of these the following poem may serve as a specimen:—

"Among God's prophets, first of all is he,
The faith he taught is better far than all.
Each man of wisdom must his lover be,
To love and wisdom he is all in all.
Upon his forehead shines the light of God,
His cheek stirs envy in the starry skies.
Dust of a garden where his feet have trod
Is balm for earthly and for heavenly eyes.
The praise of his pure soul each moment spreads
On myriad angel voices through the air,
And mighty kings are proud to lay their heads
Upon his threshold where I kneel in prayer."

The poetry of Sultan Aḥmad has not yet been made the subject of any close study,—indeed the present MS. is believed to be unique and

his poems have never been published; so it must be left for some future investigator to attempt to discover whether or not they contain any references to the stormy events of his adventurous life. But it is of interest to note that one of his isolated verses contains a singular misreading of his own career by a prince who was so often a defeated fugitive, though it is probably significant of the ambitious spirit with which he was animated; it runs thus:—

> "Through the abundance of the favour of the Eternal
> the loosing and the binding of the world is in my hand."

This poem was probably written before 1393, when Aḥmad was still Sultan of Baghdad. The manuscript is decorated with only one fine Unvan in the usual Timurid style and the eight borders which make it to a unique monument of Persian art.

The binding is of brown leather, and the decoration of the outside is chiselled with a needle. It has only a few gold lines. The upper cover (Plate IX) bears a medallion in the middle with two finely drawn gazelles. The small corners of the cover are decorated with hares. As we know, the hare was taken over as a decorative motive from the Copts by the Fatimids, in whose art it is a most frequent motive. But why? A Turkish proverb says that after God had created the hare, there was a little material left, with which He created the Armenians. This sarcastic proverb unfortunately gives no explanation. The border of the binding has the characteristic Timurid band of flowers, which we find in fayence mosaic, on wooden doors, and in almost every kind of decoration from the time of Timur, or his nearest successors, and even on one page of the manuscript itself, which proves that the binding is contemporaneous with the MS. The other side of the binding (Plate X) is plainer, with only arabesque decoration and a border of these interlaced bands, which the Arab art took over from the classical. The inside of the binding (Plate XI) is of dark red leather, with a medallion in filigree work on gold ground, a decoration in which the bookbinders of that time were masters, and which, forty years later, they developed into unsurpassed delicacy and refinement.

The last page has many seals, which it is almost impossible to decipher. One page has the Tugra of Sultan Bayazid of Turkey (1481—1512). The tradition is that the MS. once belonged to Timur.

IV. THE MINIATURES AND THEIR PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF PERSIAN ART

THE eight borders which make the manuscript so important and precious for the history of Persian art, are all executed in Chinese ink with a brush of great fineness, sometimes with an "one hair" brush. Very little colour is used, only a little green, blue, some spots of red and gold. I have tried all kinds of methods to obtain a reproduction as faithful as possible, but the extreme delicacy of the original makes it very difficult. These coloured plates executed by Max Jaffé in Vienna are almost as fine as the originals. Only the gold is different as real gold cannot be used in reproductions.

PLATE I. LANDSCAPE

THIS border represents a scene from life in the country in Central Asia. An old Tartar with his wife bearing a little child are walking through one of those arid landscapes in Turkistan, where only small bushes spring up from the earth. Two cows are watching how a young man drives a couple of buffaloes through a stream, where swimming ducks are trying to escape the danger of the approaching beasts. The resemblance which this scene bears to the picture by the celebrated Sung master, Li-Ti, belonging to Masuda Takashi of Tokio,[8] with a buffalo returning on a snowy day, is so striking that there must be some connection between the two. (Plate XII.) But I am sorry for the Chinese to have to say that this drawing is quite as good. The Swedish painter, Liljefors, who is not unknown to the English public, has not painted flying geese or swimming ducks better or with a more careful study of the peculiarities of their movements. The little flower border in the text is characteristic of the time of Timur. It occurs even on the outside of the binding of this manuscript. May it not have been taken from the silk border, with a flower design, of a Chinese Kakemono from the early Ming period?

PLATE II. SPRING.—A LOVE SCENE

THE spring of the East, not the spring of northern Europe. The spring of the East is awakening, not only the earth, but all the sweet perfumes of the air. The trees are blossoming, the earth is bright with flowers and the air is mild and full of exquisite odours. Under a huge plane-

tree, in which small birds are flying and singing, stands a young man and a young lady. He is leaning against a young tree, on which the leaves have not yet come out. She is dressed in a long coat embroidered or woven with swimming ducks.[9] In the lower margin is a bed as used in the East—a big piece of felt and a carpet decorated also with swimming ducks, drawn in the masterly manner of the Chinese. The embroidered cushions lie in disorder to show what has passed. Dishes laden with fruit, bottles of wine and water and an incense burner stand beside the rug. In the right corner lies the woman now awaiting the birth of a child. Behind a big tree sits the doctor waiting upon her.

Have these long figures not a Gothic look? Could not a French 13th or 14th century wooden Madonna have served as model? Could not figures such as the beautiful life size one in the Bardini-Museum in Florence but smaller have been brought to Samarkand by some courageous Italian artist or dealer who was searching better fortune there than in his own country? Artists of all kind, of all countries were welcome at Samarkand. The voyage was long, but gave possibility of making business on the way through Persia after having left the Italian factories on the coast of the Black Sea or in inner Asia Minor. The little Italian who still goes to Sweden or Russia to sell plaster casts is a man of courage and faith and makes propaganda for the beauty of his country. They could easely bring many Italian curiosities (small painting, sculptures and silks) in a couple of painted, cassoni which served them as better bed than the mud pavement in the caravansaries of Persia. Italian paintings certainly appealed to the imagination of the Eastern artists who set down to paint in the same colourscheme.

PLATE III. AUTUMN

TWO philosophers and five men listening to them are sitting under a large plane-tree on a stone terrace with a finely carved balustrade. This is a scene often met with in the East. The birds flying in the tall trees seem to care little about the serious questions, which are being discussed by these grave men. Might not the heads of these philosophers have been etched by an artist of the quality of Rembrandt? Neither the expression of the faces, nor the fineness of the lines, would have been unworthy of him. The huge plane-tree is one of those venerable solitary giants so beloved by the Orientals, who, curiously enough, hate woods,

because, as a Turkish Grand Vizir once said: "There are too many brigands in them." The little terrace with its balustrade has too much of the Chinese character in it, not to have been copied from a Chinese original. The arrangement of this picture goes back to China; there is not the slightest doubt about that. The mighty trunk of the plane-tree is drawn more in the Chinese than in the Persian manner. Trees strikingly like this were often painted by the Chinese Sung and Yuan masters. We must never forget that Turkistan is next door neighbour to China.

PLATE IV. THE LIGHT IS BROUGHT TO THE EARTH

THIS leaf is, perhaps, the most astonishing of all. It is an illustration of the Prometheus legend in a nobler and more poetical form than any European artist has ever produced. The reproduction does not give exactly the blue colour of the wings of the angels, nor the gold in different tones coming down from the blue sky, from which delightful small angels are looking down. For the first time in Muhammedan art, we see such a representation; many of the details are even unknown in Eastern art. The faces of these angels, who bring the light, are the most charming ever met with in Persian art. They look like young Italian girls.

The descent of the angels has a counterpart, not in Chinese, but in Japanese art, which may be just as beautiful. (I have only seen a reproduction of it in black and white in Tome XIV of "Selected Relics," Pl. 6.) This represents the descent of Amitayasu from Paradise, and is preserved in the temple of Chion-in at Kyoto. The picture is said to be by Ỵeshin Sozu, but the Japanese author of the description which accompanies the plate, states that it is certainly from the Kamakara epoch 1200—1400, and calls it a bright jewel in the crown of Japanese pictorial art. I wish the crown of Persian art had many such jewels as this border. Splendid jewels are very rare even in the East, the land of jewels. The way in which the gold is put on points to the same original for both, which is probably Chinese. The flickering of the flames—one sees how they will die away in the next moment—is represented in the same way and is unlike the work of any European artist, who could never have painted them so delicately transparent.

This representation stands alone in the whole of the earlier art of Persia. The explanation I offer is that the artist had seen not only a Chinese or Japanese picture, but also some European religious painting

with blue angels on a gold ground, such as we meet with at the end of 14th or the beginning of 15th century, and that he tried to combine the arts of the East and the West. There is so great a resemblance that there must be an influence from both sides. It is very likely that some Flamish or Italian Breviarium or picture had found its way to Samarkand; that a similar page would make a great impression upon a Persian artist is certain. With all its Eastern character, this border has still something very Gothic. May not French artists have gone to Samarkand, since there were French jewellers at the Mongol Court in Central Asia at the time of Marco Polo?

At the Cathedral at Senlis over the Western portal is a representation of the Resurrection of the Virgin—a marvel of early Gothic sculpture, which is not so well known and admired as it ought to be. It is equal in beauty to this page. The ceiling in the Chapel of the house of Jacques Cœur at Bourges painted about 1443 is also worthy of being put in connection with this border.

PLATES V—VI. CAMP SCENE

THESE two pages surprised me most when I first saw the manuscript. I have never seen in any Persian manuscript a nomad camp scene. My thoughts at once went back to my first travels in Central Asia, to the days when our little caravan, composed of Colonel Waters, British Military Agent at St. Petersburg, and myself, some Russian soldiers, Mongol and Tartar servants, were ascending the Alay mountains to get a distant look at the mountains close to the Pamirs, the so-called roof of the world. Every night we arranged our camp in the same manner, in the delightful fresh air over 3000 metres above sea level. These leaves could be an illustration of our journey. Our tents were not so richly decorated, but otherwise the camps were the same. They were erected in exactly the same way, the bringing of the wood, making the fire, washing the clothes, the playing of the children, the milking of the cows, everything is exactly the same as I saw many times on that journey. The scenery in the upper part of the page can be seen every market day in Central Asia. Every traveller has seen it, I have seen it hundreds of times, and it seems as if I had met all these people before. What delicacy of the lines, what richness of the details! What living artist could give such simple scenes so great in decorative character? They look almost like frescoes, so grand are they.

PLATE VII. SWIMMING DUCKS

PROBABLY most of these small squares in the manuscript ought to have been filled up in this way with small figures. These two have unfortunately been touched up, probably not long after they were drawn. The ducks seen swimming in the margin below are so delicately drawn that they can hardly be seen on the original. It is a great pity that a later calligrapher has filled the margin with his ugly writing.

PLATE VIII. RIVER SCENE

IN my young days it was written in every history of art that Eastern art had no landscape painting and no perspective. I wonder what European artist could have drawn this mountain stream in a more perfect way? The ducks, the crows, the small birds and the butterflies flying among the bushes, which are just beginning to put out their leaves, are more naturally drawn than Dürer could have done. This is a charming little corner of a landscape at the border of a small river in the neighbourhood of Samarkand, but it could just as well have been any other country with the same vegetation. The small rapid streams in the Engadine, with their icy crystal clear water, give a similar effect. What poetry in such a little picture! I have often thought of this page during my excursions in these wonderful parts of the world. The ducks in the curling water are drawn much more finely than in Plate I. Even the movement of the water is better drawn.

The swimming ducks represented so naturalistically, are very likely inspired by or copied from Hellenistic frescoes or mosaics. Beautiful ones of the same kind, probably made at Alexandria, are to be seen in the Museum at Naples. The birds are just as naturalistically drawn as in the MS., their heads and breasts being reflected in the water which also reflects the lotusflower and other plants. The rôle which the Hellenistic frescoes and mosaics have played in the art of Persia deserves much more study than it has hitherto received and will then be proved to have been much greater than we now suppose.

ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THIS MANUSCRIPT, we know nothing more than that it has been in the possession of Sultan Bayazid II of Turkey, whose Tugra is on the last leaf. The tradition is that it belonged to Timur. The library of the Turkish Sultan must have been an extraordinarily fine one, especially in books from the Timurid period; it would be well

worth while to try to reconstruct a catalogue of it. Most of the fine manuscripts of the time of the Timurids bear his Tugra. He probably came into possession of a whole library from some of these princes.

Of late years there have been on the market several manuscripts from the libraries of Baysunkur and Shah Rukh, but they have all been without miniatures. They have only these extraordinary beautifully decorated pages, so characteristic of the time before 1450, that one only needs to open such a book to immediately fix its date. It may be that one day catalogues of their library will turn up from India, or perhaps from Afghanistan. I have less hope from Persia. My greatest hope is that they are hidden in some Turkish library, because so many of these manuscripts which have the seal of Sultan Bayazid, are still to be found in Turkish libraries.

I think the story of this MS. would be the following. A copy of the poems of Sultan Ahmad was certainly amongst the booty that Timur took from his palace at Baghdad and sent to Samarkand, or some of his courtiers had with them a copy. His wives and sons were certainly anxious to return to Baghdad and to escape from captivity in Samarkand. However great the capital of Samarkand had become, it was not Baghdad. The climate was a different one, and anybody who had been born in Baghdad could hardly live at Samarkand. The snow of Samarkand would certainly make the wives of Sultan Ahmad long to be back in Baghdad. Goethe has said that a lazzarone at Naples would certainly refuse to be a Viceroy of Norway because of the climate.

It may be that some of them enriched this copy as a present to Timur, who certainly would have been very pleased to possess the poems of Sultan Ahmad. This cruel man had a childish love and admiration for poets and artists. It was perhaps his only pleasure, as to-day many of our modern financial Timurs refresh their overstrained nerves by making collections of works of art.

The family of Ahmad thought, perhaps, through such a present to soften the heart of Timur. To make the copy richer, they probably asked an artist from the court of Timur to ornament its borders, because the drawings all represent landscapes from the vicinity of Samarkand. On the other hand, Timur, after receiving the book, may have been so pleased with it that he ordered one of his own artists to do this. The fact that only eight pages have borders, make me believe that they were made by order of Timur himself. His death, shortly after the manuscript got into his hands, may explain that the decoration of the borders was stopped.

The borders have been painted as always after the manuscript, or at least the paper with its golden and blue lines had been prepared. The fact that six pages are left blank for being adorned with miniatures makes me believe that the MS. was written before Sultan Ahmad left his capital. But the copist worked quicker than the artist, who often took many years to finish the miniatures.

It may have been the intention of the artist to have all the pages adorned in this way. If that had been done, we should have had one of the most magnificent manuscripts imaginable, just as extraordinary as the Breviarium Grimani. That question nobody can answer, unless one day we find some reference in Persian literature to the manuscript. Was the brain of the artist capable of creating many hundreds of borders with motives all taken from the intimate life of Samarkand, or the landscape in Turkistan? The lively scenery in that vast district would certainly have given him subjects enough. Everything is possible in the East. That is its great eternal charm.

I should be indeed be glad if I only knew who has executed these wonderful drawings. I should be still more so if I could find a portrait of him, or some other work by him. Who ordered it, Timur or the family of Sultan Ahmad? What was he paid for his work? Hundreds of questions could be asked, but hardly any can be answered, at least now.

There are very few if any miniatures of such an intimate, human character in the whole Asiatic and European art. There is nothing official about them. There is a breath of classical beauty and harmony over these scenes such as exists in hardly any other Persian miniatures. There is something of the quietness of the Santa Barbara by van Eyck in the Antwerp Museum. The artist stands out almost as a phenomenon. Let us hope that more of this kind will be discovered.

What makes these drawings stand alone in early art? It is not only their perfection, but also the subject. Real landscapes are very rare in Persian art. They mostly serve only as backgrounds to the Shah sitting on his throne, or in connection with some of the poetry of Nizami and others. Here we have landscapes taken directly from nature, of a naturalistic style perfectly unknown in Persian art. The earliest landscapes in Persian art were probably Hellenistic, not unlike those we know from Pompei, with the same simplicity, the same broad decorative character. They were certainly mostly painted on walls, and were

direct descendants of the Greek wall paintings. But we have nothing left of that kind; only from about 1200 some miniatures are known.

Who was the painter of these wonderful borders? Certainly a Persian who had seen Chinese pictures, not a Chinaman who had learned in the Persian school, for such an artist would never have been capable of giving that strong decorative feeling to the work, which is so truly Persian. I am certain, however, that he had seen Chinese originals, that Chinese paintings gave him his ideas. There is the same charm in these borders as in the many Chinese landscape paintings of the Sung period, the Fontainebleau School of China. Who can prove that Timur had not a collection of Chinese pictures? that he had not taken possession of that picture gallery at Baghdad which the Mongols brought with them from China in order to adorn their palaces? I am certain that he even obtained Chinese pictures and many other works of art from the relatives of his Chinese wife, Bibi Khanim. They would certainly have given him such paintings, knowing his keen interest in all art.

References to Chinese objects are very rare in Persian literature. We know of a few from the period of the Caliphate at Baghdad. I have lately found one[10] which proves in what high esteem Chinese objects were held. Shah Rukh sent to his capital, Herat, his private treasures, consisting of precious stones, superb pearls, vessels of gold and silver, Indian and Egyptian arms and precious things from China.

I am more inclined to believe that the originals, which inspired our artist, were old Sung pictures, rather than those from the Yuan or early Ming period. Orientals often have a strong veneration for what is the old.

The famous Sung painter Mu-chi or Hsia Kuei[11] has not painted birds and animals better, or with more realistic sense. In the touch of the brush, these borders closely resemble the figures drawn by the famous Sung Emperor Hui-Tsung.

To judge by the reproductions, in the Japanese publications such as "Select Relics" and "Selected Masterpieces," the artists of Southern Sung seem generally to have been broader and more sensitive in their brush-work than the others.[12] I am inclined to think that Liang Kai and Mu-chi,[13] have influenced the Persian artists less. They lack the classical quietness. Perhaps in the Timur collection paintings existed like that of M. Vignier[14] in Paris, which may have inspired our artist with the border in our MS.

We must also take into consideration the lack of colour in these borders. They are all painted with Chinese ink with the addition of

a very little green, or blue colour and some small red dots. One might almost call them grisailles. They make me think of old watercolours from which most of the colour has gone. In the whole of our European art of that period no artist was capable of executing anything like it. Paolo Uccello, who perhaps had been in the East—I firmly believe it, but cannot prove it—is the only artist who tried such problems of movement without being able to resolve them. His brush was too coarse, whereas these drawings are of the finest. Other early European artists could draw figures better than the Chinese, but they had not much eye for landscape, or for animals and flowers. The only one who tried to do something of this sort was Dürer, but he lived 100 years later.

Engravings and Woodcuts by Dürer certainly came through the missionaries to the Court of Shah Thamasp. I think that is the only explanation that some of his court artists revived that love for angels as decorative motive which we so often saw in the Timurid art. I am convinced that Dürer is the spiritual grandfather of the angels in the border of the famous hunting carpet of the Emperor of Austria. Just as I am convinced that Dürer in Venice saw Persian miniatures and perhaps also borders of this kind. There may be some relation between these and what he draw in the prayer-book of Emperor Maximilian. His borders are certainly not inspired by the usual heavy compact borders of the manuscripts of the 15th century.

In my coming great work about Persian art I will treat this important question with some new and rather surprising details.

These drawings show a perfect art, such a perfection that only hundreds of years of uninterrupted culture and tradition could realize. What is done here is the last thing that can be done with the brush. After this, the decadence must set in.

If Bihzad is called the Memling of Herat, the painter of these borders could be called the van Eyck of Samarkand.

V. EARLY CHINESE INFLUENCE ON PERSIAN MINIATURES

THAT Chinese painting is the father of the Persian miniatures no one any longer doubts just as Greek sculpture created the Roman. The difference is that the Persians were always an artistic people, which the Romans were not until the beginning of the Empire. The consequence was that they took only the best from the Chinese paintings, and their own taste, love of colour and decorative sense accomplished the rest. These artistic qualities were to a great degree a heritage from the conquest of Alexander the Great. Some years ago it was the general conviction that the time of Shah Abbas, with his Riza Abbasi, was the greatest period of Persian art. Then older things were discovered. Shah Thamasp was put at the top, with the magnificent manuscript belonging to Baron Edmond de Rothschild as the climax. Then we went further back and further East to Sultan Husain Baikara, with his favourite painter Bihzad. Just as in Italy the period of Raphael will always be the Golden Age, though there are many artists in Italy before him, who appeal to most people more than the perfection of the Urbinate; so it is in Persia. This manuscript of Sultan Ahmad will prove that Bihzad had predecessors just as great, if not greater, than himself. It is almost impossible to decide who is the greater of two great artists, e.g. who can say whether Donatello or Michael Angelo was the greater as a sculptor?

These borders are in many ways finer than anything Bihzad executed, in design, in skill of brushwork, and in sentiment, but they lack colour. Whether anything finer which unites all qualities ever will be found, it is impossible to say. The East is still the country of surprises.

It seems to me likely that in olden days Persia had artists just as great as the Chinese. But we know nothing about them. It may be that one day some of their work will be found. The manicaean miniatures found in Central Asia are the cheap works of ordinary copists.

The condition of Persia was not very conducive to a flourishing school of painting before the Mongol period, but a single genius may have sprung up and have obtained the protection of a small, now forgotten, prince. For the moment our knowledge of Persian and Arabic painting does not go farther back than about 1200. I only know of some unimportant drawings from of about 100 years earlier in a sort of school book of those days.

The great centre was still Baghdad, which was so enormous and rich, that it could have the luxury of many different schools of painting, or rather manufactories, where perhaps hundreds of miniatures were finished every day by diligent craftsmen, each of whom had his speciality. Hardly any of those early miniatures are the work of an individual artist.

The usual Bidpai and Hariri miniatures were for poor people, for scholars and schools. They were ordinary picture books. It is a great mistake of our collectors to look upon these primitive miniatures as great works of art. They are the only thing we know of the pictorial art of that period; that is what makes them interesting. I remember when a great art critic of a great country, who when saw these earliest Arabic miniatures for the first time, called them drawings for "pains d'épice." He certainly was right. It would be very interesting to find a drawing for a "pain d'épice" for the table of even a humble workman in Baghdad. I would probably pay more for it than for one of these miniatures. The drawing for the cake for the wedding of one of the daughters of Harun al Rashid would fill me with just as much joy as if I found a piece of the cake itself. Sir Aurel Stein has been lucky enough to find such cakes in Central Asia, but I think nobody has the courage to taste them, even if the Museum officials would allow it.

These cheap miniatures were probably made in a few hours, while the fine ones took weeks to finish. The outlines were made with stencils, when they were not drawn by free hand. In one of my forthcoming books on Persian art, I shall publish my collection of stencils. I am certain that that collection will change many ideas about the way in which miniatures were created. They will explain how traditions could continue for such a long time.

A few years ago, the "Gazette des Beaux Arts" in Paris[15] published reproductions of some miniatures belonging to an album in the library of Yildiz at Constantinople. Sultan Abdul Hamid was kind enough to let me see that album in 1899, but at that time it was impossible to get photographs of them.

These landscapes, mostly with animals, seem to be Persian translations of Chinese originals of the Sung period. The date given to them, about 1200, seems to me to be right. They are not inspired by the Sung masterpieces, but by ordinary pictures. The Persian work has lost the Chinese freshness, but has instead been given that never failing decorative sense, certainly a Hellenistic heritage, which the Chinese only acquired later,

mostly during the Ming period, perhaps through a double influence from Persia and Japan. These Yildiz miniatures come close to the Pierpont Morgan manuscript.[16] They may also be regarded as the ancestors of the Mongol miniatures such as those in the Royal Asiatic Society and University of Edinburgh manuscript of Jāmi'ut-Tawārīkh.[17] That the Chinese introduced their touch of brush into the Persian miniatures already during the Mongol conquest is proved by the Dyson Perrins manuscript,[18] dated 1262. I do not think it necessary to ascribe all these naturalistic landscapes to Eastern Persia. They could just as well have been executed in Baghdad or anywhere else, as they are not taken from nature, but are only translations of Chinese paintings, or reproductions of still earlier Persian miniatures. If a Chinese painting could travel in a trunk to Samarkand or Buchara or Herat, it could just as well go on to Baghdad, as it would only take a few weeks more in the same caravan. Baghdad was the Paris of the Near East of that time, just as Samarkand became so for a short time under Timur's reign until the Timurid capital was transfered to Herat. From there the capital came back to Persia during the Safavid dynasty.

VI. OTHER MINIATURES FROM THE TIME OF TIMUR

THESE borders show that the climax of Persian art had already been reached in the time of Timur. I believe the world has been a little unjust to him. We generally see in him only the barbarian, who delighted in the sight of heaps of decapitated heads. The paintings of the Russian artist Veretschagin have to a great extent contributed to create the opinion that he was the god of atrocity. I have always thought differently of him, regarding him what he certainly thought himself to be, the re-organiser of Asia. What Lenin—perhaps his descendant but with far less artistic taste—wished to do and could not, Timur did, at least for a short time, with means adapted to Asiatic people. I think that he really was a great man. He had many qualities in common with the Italian princes of the Renaissance, and I think we must regard him as the father of the Renaissance of Persia. His family and descendants played in

Persia a rôle similar to that of the Medici in Florence. His capital Samarkand to this day bears witness of his great ideas, of his sense of beauty. His buildings are masterpieces of elegancy of line, richness of colour, preciousness of material. His own tomb in Gour Emir[19] is, even in its present dilapitated condition, an unsurpassed monument. It is one of the world's finest buildings. His tombstone with its proud inscription is one of the largest pieces of jade in the world.

In the history of Shah Rukh, translated by Quatremère,[20] a marvellous pavilion is described in which the walls were covered with Yeshan stones. Does that really mean jade, or is it the same stone as still panels the walls inside of the Gour Emir? These stones were decorated with plants, if by engraving or gilding, the text does not say. But for us, the most important thing is that all the rooms were decorated with paintings, executed by the most able painters. That is one of the few secure references to mural paintings before the time of Shah Abbas.

There are very few illuminated manuscripts known from about 1400. The only one from Timur's lifetime is in the British Museum.[21] It is dated 1396, and was written and painted at Baghdad at the time of Sultan Ahmad. It may have been executed for some of his courtiers, but as the first pages with the old dedication have been replaced by later ones from the beginning of 16th century, it is impossible to find out for whom it was made. Were the miniatures made in Baghdad? They may have been executed there, but the landscapes are not what one would expect from the shores of the Tigris. These mountains, even if they are not naturalistic, but inspired by Chinese paintings, point more to Samarkand. Many details in the interiors, such as the curtains, the carpet, point to China. The only resemblance it bears to the Sultan Ahmad manuscript is the small birds flying about the trees. It is extraordinary that such a common thing in our art is so rarely met with in Persian art. The stuffs on fol. 20, painted in gold just as on Plate II in Sultan Ahmad's manuscript. The colourscheme in this manuscript shows the transition from the Arabic to the Timurid style. One of them is here reproduced on Plate XIII.

Another manuscript[22] dated later, 1410–11, has also some details of resemblance to the Sultan Ahmad manuscript. The angels on fol. 6 are of the same style. The golden flames on fol. 263 are in two colours of gold, but how solid they are, not to be compared with the flickering fire we have seen in the Sultan Ahmad manuscript. There are borders decor-

ated in a manner that bears a certain resemblance to ours, but they are all the work of a craftsman, who has combined figures, animals, trees and plants, probably taken from some sketchbook, without making a proper composition out of them. Not a great artist made them.

A third manuscript is the famous Yates Thompson[23] manuscript, executed in 1410 for the grandson of Timur, Sultan Iskandar, whom the scribe gives the following modest titles:—The most powerful Sultan and the most just Emperor, King of the Kings of the Arabs and Persians, Shadow of the God in two countries, Lord of the water and land, the greatest King, the Splendor of the world and the faith, &c. In some ways it is unique. Its four decorated pages in the beginning are unsurpassed in richness, brilliancy and minuteness. They can, to my mind, stand comparison with the best Irish manuscript. But many of the miniatures are neither very interesting nor beautiful. These naked figures must have been copied from Hellenistic frescoes, which were probably found in some tombs, or they may be inspired by European paintings, although naked figures were not common in European art about 1400. These have a look of classical art which the naked in the European Quattrocento have not. (Plates XIV–XVI.)

As the later history of this manuscript is not known, I may tell it.

In 1895 I bought that manuscript for a friend from a dealer in Cairo for £120. My friend wrote me a rather angry letter, saying that it was not good enough for him, and exchanged it in Paris for some quite unimportant Japanese thing, now perhaps worth £10. Before I bought the manuscript, I showed it to a famous French scholar, who held an official position in Cairo, and he strongly advised me not to pay more than 1000 francs for it. I was not to be convinced, and was very sorry that my friend did not appreciate the manuscript, and still more when my family did not allow me to buy it back. I was in Egypt for my health, not to make collections. But I am glad that time has shown that I was right. Mr. Yates Thompson paid £160 for it, as no Paris collector at that time had the courage to spend 5000 francs upon such an extraordinary thing. At the Yates Thompson sale, the manuscript fetched £5600 and a famous Paris collector shortly afterwards bought it for about £7000. Perhaps that sum was too much. I relate this story only to show upon how uncertain a basis the appreciation of the works of art is founded.

I know of no more MS. with miniatures of importance from the early Timurid period. In my work about Oriental Miniatures I ascribed

the two fine drawings belonging to Dr. F. Sarre[24] in Berlin to the Timurid period. I am now sorry to say that they are a craftsman's copy after originals, of the same kind as the Sultan Ahmad borders. In these leaves the extreme fineness of the lines were more important than their impressionistic touch. How dry and dead these lines seem in comparison with the early ones, in which every part is life. They may be a work of that Shah Kuli Naqqash whose work the Persians are so found of. There were later on many who worked in his style, but they were only able craftsmen not great artists, and their work is in accordance dry and tedious when one has seen the originals, which were unknown, when I wrote my book. It is just the same thing as with the admiration for the Roman sculpture before the Greek was known. I am certain that with the time our whole appreciation of Persian and Indian art has to be revised. The more profound the knowledge about Eastern art growes, the easier it will be to eliminate what is only marvellous craftsmanship. We will found many more artists with their own distinct individuality. That has happened with many arts, especially with the Chinese and Japanese upon which we now look with quiet different eyes than 30 years ago.

I think that drawings as these borders, heightened with very little colour and gold, have later on inspired the artists, or rather craftsmen, who, in such great numbers, where employed at the court of Akbar, and some of his successors to carry out their over-rich, over-crowded miniatures in very pale colours, where the minuteness of the work is greater than the artistic feeling. After the first exclamation of admiration, these miniatures tire the European eye. It is just as tiresome to look through such a manuscript, as to go through the Pinacotek at Bologna. The Indian craftsmen have always something of German stiffness and perfection into their work. That phantasy, that spirit, which makes the Persian works so pleasing, never tiring, is very seldom found in India. I do not know any art, of which one so soon get tired as the Indian. I really sometimes pity those collectors who buy Indian Carlo Dolci's believing they got Botticelli's and Raphael's. Only the animals painted by Mansur and the portraits stand on the highest level, compared with the great masters of the world.

VII. PERSIA AND ITALY

WHAT Italy was for the arts of Europe, Persia was for Asia, the retort in which foreign arts were refined before they were sent to other countries. The rôle that Persia played in Asiatic art is infinitely greater than that of China or Japan, which received more than they gave. Every one nowadays talks about the influence of China on Persia. I shall soon begin to write about the influence of Persia upon the rest of Asia, not only during the Sasanian period, but later. It will one day be compared with that of Italy on European art.

The ancient Persians were masters in the difficult art of concentration just as were the Egyptians, in the representation of animals stronger. On that foundation Hellenistic art erected still further triumphs. Very few vestiges are left at Greek art in Persia but we may hope that when digging the soil of Persia begins, just as many surprises will come to light as through the recent excavations in Central Asia. The whole world, not merely a single nation, ought to participate in these excavations. They may also yield treasures of Sasanian art. All the superb silver vases, bronzes and silks have been found outside the country where they were made, having been brought to foreign countries in olden times. They have there been kept as wonders of the skill of the Persian craftsmen.

The history of Muhammadan Persia is an Asiatic pendant to the history of Italy at the same period. Persia may be called the Italy of Asia.

Both countries had the same constant invasion of different nations, the same constant internal conflicts, the same violent character of their rulers, the same grand in conception of art. Without the Persian refinement and harmony which is perhaps greater than that of Italy the arts of Asia would have been much poorer. Great artists very often destroy just as much as they create, not only their own work when they are not pleased with it, but by putting the works of their predecessors out of fashion. Fashion has destroyed more than the Huns and the Goths.

The Renaissance is not exclusively an Italian movement or an Italian invention. We find it in many people in Asia even earlier than in Italy. We find it in every country with an ancient civilisation. Only two countries have not yet had a Renaissance, Russia and America.

It would be extremely interesting to find out if just at the time of Timur Hellenistic remains had been discovered. I think it very likely

that when digging for foundations and enlarging his Samarkand, classical remains were brought to light at the old Afrasiab, founded by the followers of Alexander the Great. Certainly an old house with frescoes or mosaics would greatly have interested the court artists and craftsmen which he had brought to his capital from every country he had conquered and from Europe. In our days small things, terracotta statuettes, &c., are found almost every day in the mounds that cover Afrasiab. I once wanted to make excavations there, and Emperor Nicolas II graciously gave me permission, a little against the laws of his Empire. But the expenses were too great. The Greek settlement is in many places 18 metres under the actual surface.

There is in art through all the ages and all the countries a constant flux and reflux, in Asia stronger than in other parts of the world. Persia was the regulator of these movements, in Persia the horribly fantastical Indian exaggerations of art would be impossible. Indian art is a sort of jungle art. India is an enormous hothouse in which its conservative artists or rather craftsmen devoid of almost all sense of harmony or measure try to imitate and transform into art its luxuriant vegetation, the monstrous trees, the overluxuriant flowers. What the elephant is among the beasts, Indian art is among the arts.

Persia tried to moderate that exaggeration, the art of the Moghul court was a wonderful flower, but so heavily forced that it died very soon without leaving much trace in later periods. It was too refined for the Indians, with whom refinement is principally restricted to social forms. The Moghul art was a foreign importation, too foreign to be accepted by that extraordinary Indian conservatism. Athens will never be able to put harmony in the wild exaggerations of Berlin.

Persia was also politically what Lombardy or Sicily was once. The Paradise that everybody dreamed to conquer, from Alexander the Great to the Turkish Emperors. It has been conquered many times but has made itself free just as many times. The race is too strong to remain under foreign rule for a long period. Most other Asiatic races have accepted foreign domination almost without grumbling. I still believe in the future of Persia and its art just as hundred years ago poets believed in the future of Italy. The elements for a new Renaissance are there; they only sleep. The wonderful skill which the Persians show in forging miniatures, lacquers, carpets and pottery proves that the technic is still alive. Who will awake them? The new Shah?

VIII. HOW THE MANUSCRIPT WAS FOUND IN CONSTANTINOPLE

THE story of how this manuscript came into my possession is so curious that I think it worth telling.

At the beginning of November 1912, when the Greeks and the Bulgars were advancing on Constantinople, an Armenian dealer in Paris asked me: "Could you give me some thousand francs? I have heard of a very fine Persian manuscript in Constantinople, and I want to go and buy it. I will then sell it to you with a small profit for myself." Knowing the "small profit" and the value of such a promise, I said to myself: "I must go there myself." I went directly to the Wagon-Lits and asked for a ticket for the first Orient Express for Constantinople. "You can have as many as you want," they answered. "Who goes there now?"

Off I went. On the morning of the fourth day we arrived at the Bosphorus. The Turkish flag was still flying over the forts, the Bulgars had not yet taken Constantinople, and the town was not burning as the Roumanian newspapers had reported. I went to the Pera Palace. Outside the entrance I met the wife of the French Conseiller, Madame Boppe. "Tiens, vous ici? Qu'est-ce qui vous amène?" "Je veux voir l'entrée des alliés par la Porte Dorée. Quand est-ce qu'ils entreront?" "Ils n'entreront pas, le Sultan reste."

I took a cab to Stamboul, went up the steep road which leads to the house of the Persian, who was said to be the owner of the manuscript. I had telegraphed to him that I was coming. He was waiting for me. He took the manuscript out of his chest. The fatigue of this hurried journey from Paris to Stamboul and the wonder and beauty of the first page I opened, almost brought the tears to my eyes. Fortunately the Persian did not see my emotion, as I had turned my back to him in order to be able to examine the book better in the poor light, which came through the small iron-grated window on this gloomy November day (just as dark as in London). I looked at the other pages and found them more beautiful than I expected. "How much, one word, prendre ou le laisser." The Persian named a price, which was high, but not too high. "Well, I will give you half the amount now, and the rest you shall have in ten days, because I must telegraph to Paris." "All right. I will keep it for you in a bank." The manuscript was wrapped up in

paper and sealed. I had no other seal than my finger, which was burnt by the wax. I was happy.

I went down to another Persian dealer, an old friend of mine, the same who has been so well portrayed in the famous novel "L'homme qui assassina." He was very astonished to see me in Constantinople, when everybody was fleeing from the place. I said to him: "Je viens d'acheter la plus belle pièce que j'ai vue dans ma vie." "What is that?" "The manuscript of Mirza." "You have bought it?" he asked me. "But it is modern, the decoration is printed." "Who said so?" "Monsieur ..... qui est considéré notre plus grand connaisseur après que vous avez quitté Constantinople." "Merci, il est un imbécile." "Moi, je suis un imbécile," said he. "J'avais acheté ce manuscrit pour ....." and he named a far smaller sum of money that I had paid. "J'ai proposé le manuscrit à Monsieur ..... D'abord il l'a trouvé fort joli et puis, après quelques jours, il est venue me voir disant que les dessins étaient imprimés. J'ai été obligé de reprendre le manuscrit et puis de le rendre à Mirza."

During the ten days the manuscript was deposited in the bank, the Persian was offered fifty pounds if he would only break the seals and show it to a couple of dealers, who had heard that I said it was the most beautiful manuscript I had ever seen. One day I was invited to lunch with Monsieur X...., who had refused the manuscript. "Vous n'êtes pas venu à Constantinople pour assister à l'entrée des trois Rois? Vous êtes certainement à la chasse de quelque chose extraordinaire, sinon vous n'étiez pas venu par ce temps." "Si, je suis en train d'acquérir la plus belle pièce que je n'ai jamais trouvée à Constantinople." "Vous me le faites voir?" "Certainement, quand je l'aurai. Pas maintenant." I never had the courage to show him the manuscript which he had refused, believing the miniatures to be modern. He died without seeing it.

After ten days I went off with the MS. in my bag. I stopped at Vienna, where I intended to reproduce it. I called on Mr. Berger who had made those unsurpassed reproductions of the famous prayer-book of the Emperor Maximilian with borders by Dürer. I showed him the book. He became very excited. "This is much finer than the prayer-book of Dürer, for which I almost sacrificed my life. You must let me reproduce this; this would be my best work, the crown of my career." "I am very glad that you appreciate the book. We will see how we can have it reproduced, because the reproduction must be as fine as the original."

I went then with the book to my friends at the Hof-Museum, the Dürer-Burg—the fortress of Dürer—and said to them: "Examine this book carefully, and tell me quite frankly what you think of it. When I have heard your opinion of its artistic quality, I will tell you what it is. But 'per carita,' no phrases, frankly what you think of it? Look at the pages and let me hear your judgment." They examined one or two pages and I saw the astonishment in their faces; then suddenly one of them exclaimed: "Aber Martin, die ist ja tausendmal feiner als Dürer." A greater compliment could not have been given to these borders, especially in a place where Dürer is held in higher esteem than in any other place on this earth.

"A THING OF BEAUTY IS A JOY FOR EVER"

NOTES

1 Notices et Extraits, Vol. IV, pp. 240–41, 243; Howorth, History of the Mongols, Part III, on pages 659–78 gives a chronicle of the military and political movements of Sultan Ahmad.

2 Notices et Extraits, Vol. II, pp. 19–59.

3 Notices et Extraits, Vol. XIV, Pt. I, p. 387.

4 Notices et Extraits, Vol. XIV, p. 304.

5 Notices et Extraits, Vol. XIV, p. 305.

6 Notices et Extraits, Vol. XIII, p. 223.

7 *Bilor* (in other MSS. written Bidrūr) is undoubtedly (from the description which the author gives of his route) identical with *Bednur*, a town now called Nagar, in the territory of Mysore. An account of its history is given in B. Lewis Rice, *Mysore* (Vol. II, pp. 463–4, Westminster 1897). It rose into greater importance after ʿAbd ar-Razzāq's visit, when about 1640 it became the capital of the Keladi chiefs, under whom its walls were 8 miles in circumference. In 1763 it was taken by storm by Haydar ʿAlī, who captured booty to the value of 12 millions pounds sterling; he renamed it Haydar Nagar,—hence its present name, Nagar (Notices et Extraits, Vol. XIV, Pt. I, pp. 443–4).

8 Selected Masterpieces, Tokio 1910, Tome VIII, Pl. 35–36.

9 Ducks as motif for decoration of stuff are of very early date. The earliest example which I know is a piece of tapestry in St. Petersburg reproduced in colour by Stephani, Compte rendu de la commission archéologique, 1878–79. It was found in a Greek tomb from the 4th century B.C. at Kertch. Naturally-coloured ducks are swimming on a purple ground. We find ducks as a decorative motif again on silks in Persia from about 600 and on the Sasanian reliefs at Tāq i Būstān, on silver vases, on bronzes and on wall paintings in the cave temple at Kysil in Chinese Turkistan from about 6–700 A.D. and now we find them on ladies dresses from about 1400 in this manuscript. A long tradition indeed showing how conservative in many, though not in all, ways the East is. We must always use other measures in the East than in Europe.

10 Notices et Extraits, Vol. XIV, p. 262.

11 Selected Masterpieces, Tome VIII, Pl. 61, pp. 29–30.

12 Selected Masterpieces, Tome IX, Pl. 65–75.

13 Selected Masterpieces, Tome IX, Pl. 92–93. Other pictures which could be put in connection with these borders are found in Selected Relics, Vol. XVI, Pl. 7; Vol. XIX, Pl. 7; Vol. XX, Pl. 9.

14 Waley. An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting, London 1923, Pl. 45. Liang K'ai, Vinterbirds.

15 Gazette des Beaux Arts 1922. Une école de peinture prémongole dans la Perse orientale, by Armenag Sakisian.

16 Martin. Miniature Painters, &c., Pl. 21–26.

17 Martin. Miniature Painters, &c., Pl. 27–32.

18 Martin. Miniature Painters, &c., Pl. 40–41.

19 The sumptuous publication about Gour Emir of the Imperial Archaeological Commission at St. Petersburg. Unfortunately only the first part has been issued. Will the rest ever come?

20 Notices et Extraits, Vol. XIV, Pt. I, pp. 190–91.

21 Martin. Miniature Painters, &c., Pl. 45–50.

22 Martin. Miniature Painters, &c., Pl. 53.

23 Yates-Thompson. Catalogue III, Pl. 28–44.

24 Martin. Miniature Painters, &c., Pl. 57–58.

ADDENDA

I have forgotten to state that already Firdousi in the Shah Namah talks about Chinese pictures.

PLATES



دلبرا امشب جمالت را صفایی دیگرست — ناظران را با لقایت ملتقایی دیگرست

از جمال زرفشان آفتاب دم بدم — شمع مجلس را نشد امشب ضیایی دیگرست

از نسیم جعد زلف سنبل پرتاب تو — گلستان حسن را نشو و نمایی دیگرست

در بلای قامت سرو تو گشتم مبتلا — چشم فتانت چه گویم خود بلایی دیگرست

در کدام آب و هوا پرورده اند این خوب را — شهر خوبان را مگر آب و هوایی دیگرست

بر خلاف رای سالک در اصول و سلم دین — پیر ما را در بیان عشق رایی دیگرست

مقتدای اهل علم و عقل را با ما چه کار — در طریق عشق ما را مقتدایی دیگرست

ای که صاحب قبله را با معرفت نشناختی — پیر ما را جای دین و قبله جایی دیگرست

احمدا فانی شو اندر عاشقی مردانه وار — در حقیقت نیستی را خود بقایی دیگرست

وله خلد الله تعالی خلافته و سلطانه

حسن تو که آفت جهانست — مقصود من از جهان همانست

رخ [illegible] بستان دلنو[illegible] — در مذهب عاشقی نهانست

محاج کرده تکیه بر اعمال خویشتن — ما اعتماد بر کرم ذو الجلال عبید

تا روز حشر و نشر مبادا هیچ وقت — از روزگار دولت تو انفصال عبید

احمد گدای حضرت او باش و شاه باش — شاهی گزوست این همه عز و جلال عبید

وله خلد الله تعالی خلافته و سلطانه

روی ماه تو بدیدم ز خودم یاد آمد — لب لعل تو بدیدم شکرم یاد آمد

سرورا یا قد رعنات چو کردم نسبت — طعنه مردم کوته نظرم یاد آمد

در شب تار که آن شب اثر ماه نبود — برقع از رخ چو فکندی قمرم یاد آمد

ناله عاشق بیچاره بگوشم چو رسید — در چمن نغمه مرغ سحرم یاد آمد

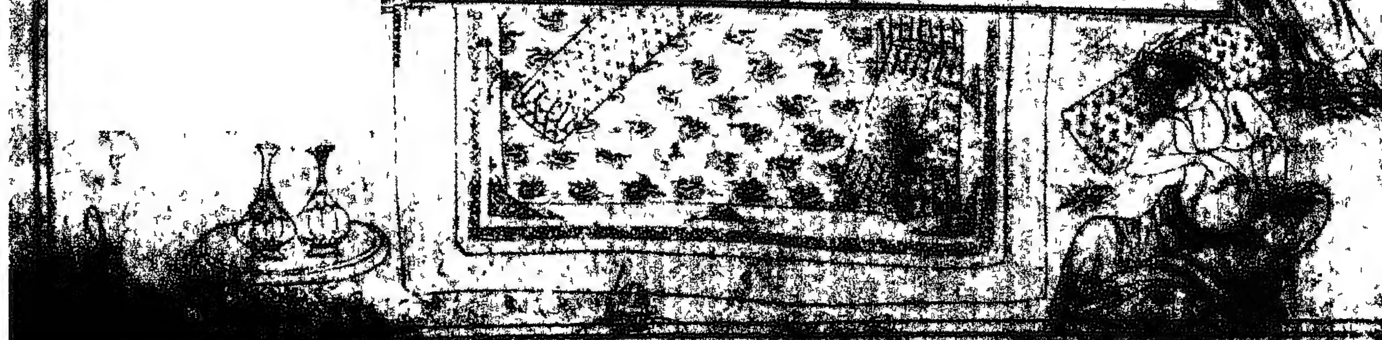
احمد اشک در پیش تو زان پیدا شد — که رخ زرد تو دیدم زر زرم یاد آمد

وله خلد الله تعالی خلافته و سلطانه

تویی که نیست ترا در جهان نهایت لطف — اگر نشان تو تا نازل شدست آیت لطف

اگرچه داد خدای یوسف حسن — ترا عطیه حسن است و هم نهایت لطف

ز بهر چه سری که کرده‌ای تو لطف را مشروح — کسی نکرد درین مرتبه رعایت لطف





رحمی کن بر خسته که دادم جانبش | دل پر زنگ مرا در نفسی تو دوا بیش

دل دیوانه بسی کرد کشاکش با زلف | عاقبت بسته شد اکنون ز کرم بگشایش

حیف باشد که ببیند رخ خوب طاعن | لیکن از عهد زبان نتوانی نمایش

چه وهم شرح که مرغ دل مسکینم | چو بپای کشد از دیگه دیالا بیش

ای دل ما به از عالم ظلمت برهاند | پرتو عکس خورشید جهان آرایش

یوسف مصر اگر عهد عزیزی بودست | گر درین عصر بدی هم زندی تمنایش

[illegible] ام [illegible] جوانی برباد | آخر عهد که صرف کنم در پایش

[illegible] | یکدایان ورش گر شدی پروایش

[illegible] | تا بود کام و دولت بدعا بیتابیش

[illegible] خلد الله تعالی خلافته و سلطانه

[illegible] | زدست [illegible]

[illegible] | بیان کرد خطابت [illegible] تسبیح

[illegible] | زی نسیم [illegible] صبح

[illegible] | [illegible]

عشق را کس نیست منکر از ولی و از نبی
هر که منکر شد بعشق و عاشقی کافر شود

طالب عشق حقیقت باز د اول عشق ست
تا مجاز او را براه عشق حق رهبر شود

...ل بدام زلف مشکین تند و سلطانی بران
تا کنیه بند ات چون سنبل و عنبر شود

شعر می گویم برقت آب می ریزم ز چشم
تا که شعر خشک من از آب دیده تر شود

آنکه سر کو بید پیر یا سر نیابد پر بدان
و آنکه سر بازد چو احمد عاقبت سرور شود

و له خلد الله تعالی خلافته و سلطانه

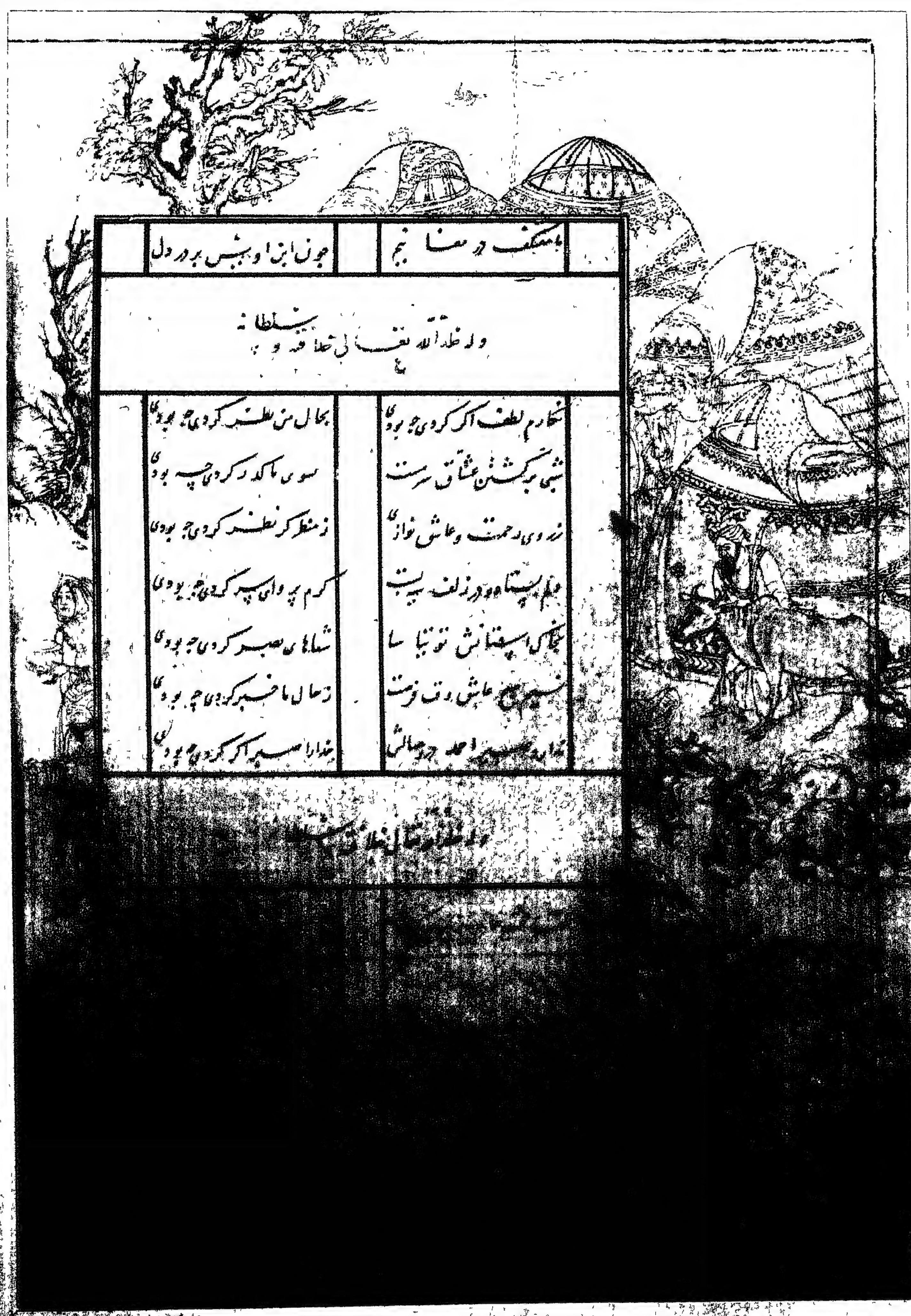
بر آفتاب پرده ز عنبرت دربند اند
آیات حسن بر رخ و زلفت مبین اند
... کشین اند ... رسین اند



عاشقان تا روز وصف خط و خالش گفته‌اند | بیدلان از صبح تا شامش تکرر کرده‌اند
یک ورق از دفتر عشق حقیقت خوانده‌اند | دفتر دیوان عالم را مستر کرده‌اند
چون رود مهرت ز جانم تا بوقت مرگ ازان | مهر مهرت را بروی دل مصور کرده‌اند
تا بنای کعبه معنی دل بنهاده‌اند | احمد بن ونیس را چون حلقه بر در کرده‌اند

و له خلد الله تعالی خلافته و سلطانه

ز دورت جنبش درمان نمی‌توان یافت | ز جورت ما به جان می‌توان یافت
[illegible] | عجب دارم که آشنائی ... یافت
[illegible] | نشان آب حیوان می‌توان یافت
[illegible]



چون این او ببیش بر در دل
وله خلد الله تعالی خلافته و سلطانه
نگارم لطف اگر کردی چه بودی
بحال من نظر کردی چه بودی
شبی بر کشتن عشاق سرمست
سوی ما گذر کردی چه بودی
ز روی رحمت و عاشق نوازی
ز منظر گر نظر کردی چه بودی

نزد لعل لب او لعل بدخشان کم گیر — با وجود قد او سرو خرامان کم گیر

گر نقاب از رخ مه بر فکند جلوه کنان — پس درخشیدن خورشید درخشان کم گیر

گفتمش آب حیاتست شنو نوش ننوش — راه ظلمت مرو و چشمهٔ حیوان کم گیر

گر گلستان طلبی طوف کنی فصل بهار — رخ او را نگر و طرف گلستان کم گیر

چون دو یار دوست که باشی همه گوش مقیم — ترک جنت بکن و ملک سلیمان کم گیر

نغمهٔ مطرب مجلس بشنو و ترک سماع — غلغل نغمهٔ مرغان خوش الحان کم گیر

شعر احمد شنو از جان که ز جان می‌گوید — سخن انوری و سعدی و سلمان کم گیر

[illegible]

دل می‌گفت دم دیگر از عقل بشیدایی — تا خود چه کند با من یار از این سودایی

تا عشق جنون بر من شد گشت و بیابان روشن — بر آب روان بنشستم نی رد فتد دانایی

میخوارم و سرمستم جام و رخ انگشتم — ز تهمت جان بنشستم دختر ترسایی

شیخ کجی دیدم گفتم که بگو دختری — گفتا که تو می‌دانی پنهانی و پیدایی

عطار چه می‌گوید از جان بشنو ایها

فانی شو اگر مردی تا محرم راز آیی

می‌کند هیچ جا مالی ز خیالت	بر سپهر خود آن بلا کاین نظر آورد
احمد عاشق شوق ز لف تو در عنبر	بس که شبان دراز تا سحر آورد

وله خلد الله تعالی خلافته و سلطانه

مشکین دل مرا ز زلف چو بازی می‌کنی	با تو نیاز می‌برم این همه نازی می‌کنی
چند گداز می‌کنی قلب شکسته مرا	قلب شکسته مرا چند گداز می‌کنی
این سنگینی تو نیست ابایز خاص تو	هر کرشمه که می‌کنی هر ابا زمی کنی
شک چه باشد اگر او بوسه دهد پای تو	شانه که باشد اگر او محرم راز می‌کنی
مطرب با نوا بیا با دف و نای و ارغنون	زهره زیره خون شود عود چو ساز می‌کنی
زاهد پر نماز کن اگر نیاز غیبت	گر نیاز بس کن چند نماز می‌کنی
احمد این وصف دو زلف او مکن	مختصری نشد که قصه دراز می‌کنی

وله خلد الله تعالی خلافته و سلطانه

رب آن باغ با بهشت با رخ با جبین	صد هزاران آفرین بر صنع رب العالمین
این چنین چشم و چنین ابرو و زلف و خط و خال	کی تواند نقش بستن سالها مانی چین



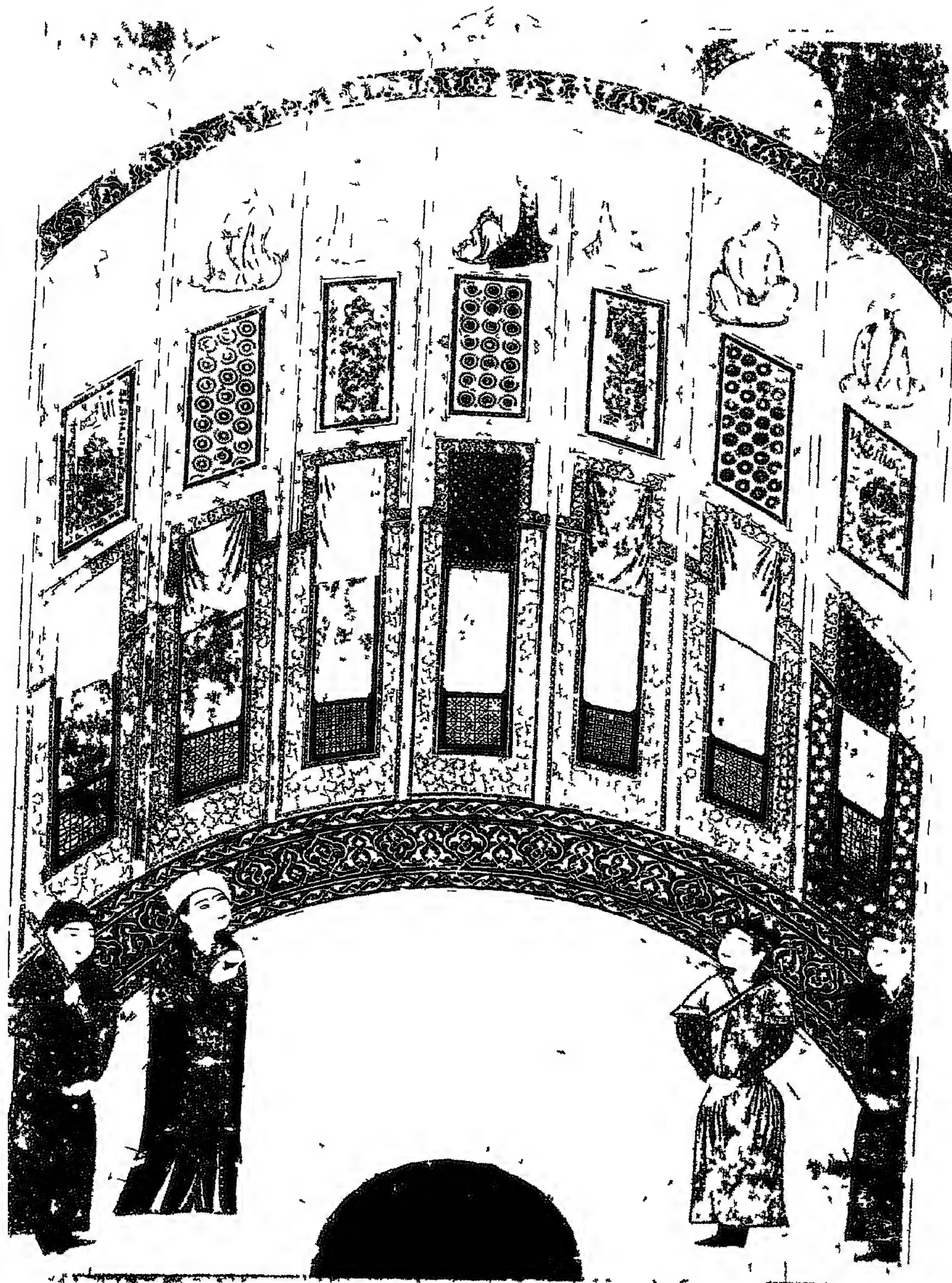
XII

PAINTING
BY LI-TI
SUNG DYNASTY



XIII

MINIATURE FROM
A MS DATED 1396



XIV

MINIATURE
FROM THE YATES THOMPSON MS.
DATED 1410



XV

MINIATURE
FROM THE YATES THOMPSON MS.
DATED 1410



XVI

MINIATURE
FROM THE YATES THOMPSON MS.
DATED 1410

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